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## “Lt. Governor Talauega Delivers Keynote at Coast Weeks Opening.”

*“Balancing our Coastal Heritage and Economic Prosperity.”*

*“We have been given stewardship over our environment, so in turn, it may fulfill its purpose of providing for us all now and into the future.”*

The Department of Commerce (DOC) kicks off this Coast Weeks celebration with a walk along our beautiful coast, with the support of the American Samoa Visitors Bureau (ASVB), Department of Human Resources (DHR), Department of Public Works (DPW), Department of Marine and Wildlife Resources (DMWR), and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The early morning walk ended with a keynote speech by Acting Governor Talauega Ale given at the Tufele Afioga Tufele Li'amatua Sr. Tufele Cultural Center at the Su'igaula Beach, Atuvasa Park.

The 2021 Coast Weeks' theme is "Balancing our Coastal Heritage and Economic Prosperity." Acting Governor Talauega highlighted the hymn *Lo Ta Nu'u* in his opening remarks at today's launch. "We must collectively come together to protect what God has gifted us. This hymn is a reminder to thank God for what He has blessed us with and of our responsibilities to be good stewards of the environment." He continued, "We have been given stewardship over our environment, so in turn, it may fulfill its purpose of providing for us all now and into the future."

Acting Governor Talauega shared that "to practice being good stewards; various departments are working towards forming a Climate Change Commission, an initiative to help protect and sustain our environment for generations to come."

Director Petti Mattila echoed the importance of this year's theme and reminded us that "we should partake in sustainable practices for our coasts as it is the source of wealth for our economy."

Under the leadership of Director Petti Mattila, the Department of Commerce staff prepared fun-filled events focused on the appreciation of American Samoa's rich coastal resources.

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